



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committees on Education and Higher Education
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By

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HB 2607 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chairs Woodson and McKelvey, Vice Chairs Kong and Hashem, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2607 that requires the Hawai'i Department of Education to develop and implement a statewide computer science curricula plan for public schools and permits students to fulfill some graduation requirements through computer science coursework. HB2607 requires the University of Hawai'i to permit applicants to fulfill certain admission requirements through computer science coursework.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) appreciates the efforts of the legislature to boost job growth and innovation in Hawai'i through the development of computer science education. UH defers to the Department of Education in matters of curricula planning for public schools, and offers these comments, pertaining only to Section 3 of HB 2607 (pages 7-8) which would amend Chapter 304A of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes by adding language on admission requirements to any University campus in 2022 or thereafter.

Specifically, this section states that the University of Hawai'i shall permit any applicant for admission to fulfill: a) one high school mathematics unit requirement by demonstrating that the applicant satisfactorily earned one computer science unit provided that the student also has fulfilled second-year algebra requirements; and b) one high school science unit requirement by demonstrating that the applicant satisfactorily earned one computer science unit, provided that the same computer science unit shall not fulfill more than one unit requirement.

While UH generally recognizes the need for strong science curricula, it is unclear that any change is needed to the admissions requirements at UH, as stated in HB 2607, to support computer science. The admissions eligibility at the UH community colleges are to be 18 years of age or older and to have earned a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent. At UH four-year campuses, students seeking admissions could use a computer science course as one or more electives.

The UH does not support substituting computer science courses for the foundational science courses such as biology, chemistry, and physics, or math courses. Instead, UH encourages high school students to supplement this foundation with computer science courses, particularly students intending to go into the STEM fields, including information and communications technology (ICT).

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2607.